

## Assembly Bill No. 82

### CHAPTER 92

An act to amend Sections 12804.9 and 12804.11 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor July 25, 2011. Filed with  
Secretary of State July 25, 2011.]

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 82, Jeffries. Vehicles: firefighting equipment.

(1) Existing law regulates the operation of firefighting equipment, as defined, and permits certain persons employed as a firefighter or registered as a volunteer firefighter to operate firefighting equipment only if the person holds a class A, class B, or class C license, with certain exceptions, and a firefighter endorsement issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, after providing to the department proof of current employment or registration as a volunteer firefighter with a fire department and evidence of fire equipment operation training, passing the written firefighter examination developed by the department with the cooperation of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and submitting a report of medical examination on a department-approved form.

Existing law authorizes the department to issue restricted class A licenses or noncommercial class B licenses under specified conditions.

This bill would instead authorize the operation of firefighting equipment by either a person with a firefighter endorsement who holds a class C license, a restricted class A license, or a noncommercial class B driver's license, or by a person holding a class A or B license, as appropriate for that equipment.

(2) This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 12804.9 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read: 12804.9. (a) (1) The examination shall include all of the following:

(A) A test of the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the provisions of this code governing the operation of vehicles upon the highways.

(B) A test of the applicant's ability to read and understand simple English used in highway traffic and directional signs.

(C) A test of the applicant's understanding of traffic signs and signals, including the bikeway signs, markers, and traffic control devices established by the Department of Transportation.

(D) An actual demonstration of the applicant's ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in operating a motor vehicle by driving it under the supervision of an examining officer. The applicant shall submit to an examination appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles he or she desires a license to drive, except that the department may waive the driving test part of the examination for any applicant who submits a license issued by another state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico if the department verifies through any acknowledged national driver record data source that there are no stops, holds, or other impediments to its issuance. The examining officer may request to see evidence of financial responsibility for the vehicle prior to supervising the demonstration of the applicant's ability to operate the vehicle. The examining officer may refuse to examine an applicant who is unable to provide proof of financial responsibility for the vehicle, unless proof of financial responsibility is not required by this code.

(E) A test of the hearing and eyesight of the applicant, and of other matters that may be necessary to determine the applicant's mental and physical fitness to operate a motor vehicle upon the highways, and whether any grounds exist for refusal of a license under this code.

(2) The examination for a class A or class B driver's license under subdivision (b) shall also include a report of a medical examination of the applicant given not more than two years prior to the date of the application by a health care professional. As used in this paragraph, "health care professional" means a person who is licensed, certified, or registered in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations to practice medicine and perform physical examinations in the United States. Health care professionals are doctors of medicine, doctors of osteopathy, physician assistants, and registered advanced practice nurses, or doctors of chiropractic who are clinically competent to perform the medical examination presently required of motor carrier drivers by the federal Department of Transportation. The report shall be on a form approved by the department, the federal Department of Transportation, or the Federal Aviation Administration. In establishing the requirements, consideration may be given to the standards presently required of motor carrier drivers by the Federal Highway Administration.

(3) A physical defect of the applicant that, in the opinion of the department, is compensated for to ensure safe driving ability, shall not prevent the issuance of a license to the applicant.

(b) In accordance with the following classifications, an applicant for a driver's license shall be required to submit to an examination appropriate to the type of motor vehicle or combination of vehicles the applicant desires a license to drive:

(1) Class A includes the following:

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (3), a combination of vehicles, if a vehicle being towed has a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds.

(B) A vehicle towing more than one vehicle.

(C) A trailer bus.

(D) The operation of all vehicles under class B and class C.

(2) Class B includes the following:

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (3), a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds.

(B) A single vehicle with three or more axles, except any three-axle vehicle weighing less than 6,000 pounds.

(C) A bus except a trailer bus.

(D) A farm labor vehicle.

(E) A single vehicle with three or more axles or a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.

(F) A house car over 40 feet in length, excluding safety devices and safety bumpers.

(G) The operation of all vehicles covered under class C.

(3) Class C includes the following:

(A) A two-axle vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,000 pounds or less, including when the vehicle is towing a trailer or semitrailer with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less.

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a trailer coach not exceeding 9,000 pounds gross.

(C) A house car of 40 feet in length or less.

(D) A three-axle vehicle weighing 6,000 pounds gross or less.

(E) A house car of 40 feet in length or less or a vehicle towing another vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, including when a tow dolly is used. A person driving a vehicle may not tow another vehicle in violation of Section 21715.

(F) (i) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing either a trailer coach or a fifth-wheel travel trailer not exceeding 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating, when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation.

(ii) A two-axle vehicle weighing 4,000 pounds or more unladen when towing a fifth-wheel travel trailer exceeding 10,000 pounds, but not exceeding 15,000 pounds, gross vehicle weight rating, when the towing of the trailer is not for compensation, and if the person has passed a specialized written examination provided by the department relating to the knowledge of this code and other safety aspects governing the towing of recreational vehicles upon the highway.

The authority to operate combinations of vehicles under this subparagraph may be granted by endorsement on a class C license upon completion of that written examination.

(G) A vehicle or combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating or a gross vehicle weight rating, as those terms are defined in subdivisions (j) and (k), respectively, of Section 15210, of 26,000 pounds or less, if all of the following conditions are met:

(i) Is operated by a farmer, an employee of a farmer, or an instructor credentialed in agriculture as part of an instructional program in agriculture at the high school, community college, or university level.

(ii) Is used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations.

(iii) Is not used in the capacity of a for-hire carrier or for compensation.

(H) Firefighting equipment, provided that the equipment is operated by a person who holds a firefighter endorsement pursuant to Section 12804.11.

(I) A motorized scooter.

(J) Class C does not include a two-wheel motorcycle or a two-wheel motor-driven cycle.

(4) Class M1. A two-wheel motorcycle or a motor-driven cycle. Authority to operate a vehicle included in a class M1 license may be granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon completion of an appropriate examination.

(5) (A) Class M2 includes the following:

(i) A motorized bicycle or moped, or a bicycle with an attached motor, except a motorized bicycle described in subdivision (b) of Section 406.

(ii) A motorized scooter.

(B) Authority to operate vehicles included in class M2 may be granted by endorsement on a class A, B, or C license upon completion of an appropriate examination, except that no endorsement is required for a motorized scooter. Persons holding a class M1 license or endorsement may operate vehicles included in class M2 without further examination.

(c) A driver's license or driver certificate is not valid for operating a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210, any other motor vehicle defined in paragraph (1) or (2) of subdivision (b), or any other vehicle requiring a driver to hold any driver certificate or any driver's license endorsement under Section 15275, unless a medical certificate approved by the department, the federal Department of Transportation, or the Federal Aviation Administration, that has been issued within two years of the date of the operation of that vehicle, is within the licensee's immediate possession, and a copy of the medical examination report from which the certificate was issued is on file with the department. Otherwise, the license is valid only for operating class C vehicles that are not commercial vehicles, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210, and for operating class M1 or M2 vehicles, if so endorsed, that are not commercial vehicles, as defined in subdivision (b) of Section 15210.

(d) A license or driver certificate issued prior to the enactment of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 15200) is valid to operate the class or type of vehicles specified under the law in existence prior to that enactment until the license or certificate expires or is otherwise suspended, revoked, or canceled.

(e) The department may accept a certificate of driving skill that is issued by an employer, authorized by the department to issue a certificate under Section 15250, of the applicant, in lieu of a driving test, on class A or B applications, if the applicant has first qualified for a class C license and has met the other examination requirements for the license for which he or she is applying. The certificate may be submitted as evidence of the applicant's skill in the operation of the types of equipment covered by the license for which he or she is applying.

(f) The department may accept a certificate of competence in lieu of a driving test on class M1 or M2 applications, when the certificate is issued by a law enforcement agency for its officers who operate class M1 or M2 vehicles in their duties, if the applicant has met the other examination requirements for the license for which he or she is applying.

(g) The department may accept a certificate of satisfactory completion of a novice motorcyclist training program approved by the commissioner pursuant to Section 2932 in lieu of a driving test on class M1 or M2 applications, if the applicant has met the other examination requirements for the license for which he or she is applying. The department shall review and approve the written and driving test used by a program to determine whether the program may issue a certificate of completion.

(h) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), a person holding a valid California driver's license of any class may operate a short-term rental motorized bicycle without taking any special examination for the operation of a motorized bicycle, and without having a class M2 endorsement on that license. As used in this subdivision, "short-term" means 48 hours or less.

(i) A person under the age of 21 years may not be issued a class M1 or M2 license or endorsement unless he or she provides evidence satisfactory to the department of completion of a motorcycle safety training program that is operated pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with Section 2930) of Chapter 5 of Division 2.

(j) A driver of a vanpool vehicle may operate with a class C license but shall possess evidence of a medical examination required for a class B license when operating vanpool vehicles. In order to be eligible to drive the vanpool vehicle, the driver shall keep in the vanpool vehicle a statement, signed under penalty of perjury, that he or she has not been convicted of reckless driving, drunk driving, or a hit-and-run offense in the last five years.

SEC. 2. Section 12804.11 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

12804.11. (a) To operate firefighting equipment, a driver, including a tiller operator, is required to do either of the following:

(1) Obtain and maintain a firefighter endorsement issued by the department and obtain and maintain a class C license as described in Section 12804.9, a restricted class A license as described in Section 12804.12, or a noncommercial class B license as described in Section 12804.10.

(2) Obtain and maintain a class A or B license as described in Section 12804.9, and, as appropriate, for the size and configuration of the firefighting equipment operated.

(b) To qualify for a firefighter endorsement the driver shall do all of the following:

(1) (A) Provide to the department proof of current employment as a firefighter or registration as a volunteer firefighter with a fire department and evidence of fire equipment operation training by providing a letter, or other indication, from the chief of the fire department, or his or her designee.

(B) For purposes of this section, evidence of fire equipment operation training means the applicant has successfully completed Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1A taught by an instructor registered with the Office of the State Fire Marshal or fire department driver training that meets all of the following requirements:

(i) Meets or exceeds the standards outlined in NFPA 1002, Chapter 4 (2008 version) or the Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator 1A course adopted by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

(ii) Prepares the applicant to safely operate the department's fire equipment that the applicant will be authorized to operate.

(iii) Includes a classroom (cognitive) portion of at least 16 hours.

(iv) Includes a manipulative portion of at least 14 hours, which includes directly supervised behind-the-wheel driver training.

(C) Driver training shall be conducted by a person who is registered with the Office of the State Fire Marshal to instruct Driver/Operator 1A or a person who meets all of the following criteria:

(i) Possesses a minimum of five years of fire service experience as an emergency vehicle operator, three of which must be at the rank of engineer or higher.

(ii) Possesses a valid California class A or B license or a class A or B license restricted to the operation of firefighting equipment.

(iii) Is certified as a qualified training instructor or training officer by the State of California, the federal government, or a county training officers' association.

(2) Pass the written firefighter examination developed by the department with the cooperation of the State Fire Marshal's office.

(3) Submit a report of medical examination on a form approved by the department. The report shall be dated within four years preceding the application date, except as required by paragraph (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 12804.9. Holders of a restricted firefighters license as of January 1, 2011, are not subject to the requirement for a medical exam until he or she renews his or her license.

(c) There shall be no additional charge for adding a firefighter endorsement to an original license or when renewing a license. To add a firefighter endorsement to an existing license when not renewing the license, the applicant shall pay the fee for a duplicate license pursuant to Section 14901.

(d) (1) A driver of firefighting equipment is subject to the requirements of subdivision (a) if both of the following conditions exist:

(A) The equipment is operated by a person employed as a firefighter by a federal or state agency, by a regularly organized fire department of a city,

county, city and county, or district, or by a tribal fire department or registered as a volunteer member of a regularly organized fire department having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located, or of a tribal fire department.

(B) The motor vehicle is used to travel to and from the scene of any emergency situation, or to transport equipment used in the control of any emergency situation, and which is owned, leased, or rented by, or under the exclusive control of, a federal or state agency, a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, city and county, or district, a volunteer fire department having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located, or a tribal fire department.

(2) A driver of firefighting equipment is not required to obtain and maintain a firefighter endorsement pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) if the driver is operating the firefighting equipment for training purposes, during a nonemergency, while under the direct supervision of a fire department employee who is properly licensed to operate the equipment and is authorized by the fire department to provide training.

(e) For purposes of this section, a tiller operator is the driver of the rear free-axle portion of a ladder truck.

(f) For purposes of this section, “firefighting equipment” means a motor vehicle, that meets the definition of a class A or class B vehicle described in subdivision (b) of Section 12804.9, that is used to travel to and from the scene of an emergency situation, or to transport equipment used in the control of an emergency situation, and that is owned, leased, or rented by, or under the exclusive control of, a federal or state agency, a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, city and county, or district, or a volunteer fire department having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located.

(g) Notwithstanding paragraph (1) of subdivision (a), a regularly organized fire department, having official recognition of the city, county, city and county, or district in which the department is located, may require an employee or a volunteer of the fire department who is a driver or operator of firefighting equipment to hold a class A or B license.

(h) This section applies to a person hired by a fire department, or to a person renewing a driver’s license, on or after January 1, 2011.

SEC. 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to ensure that operators of firefighting equipment have the appropriate knowledge and skills to operate that equipment, thereby protecting public health and safety, it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.